

Bill of Rights (from *Kidipede*)

After the leaders of the new United States wrote the Constitution they had to get the thirteen states to agree to it. Some of the states didn't want to agree unless they could add some specific rights for individual people. So in 1791 the United States added ten new rights to the Constitution. These are called the Bill of Rights.

These are the ten rights that are in the Bill of Rights:

1. Congress can't make any law about your religion, or stop you from practicing your religion, or keep you from saying whatever you want, or publishing whatever you want (like in a newspaper or a book). And Congress can't stop you from meeting peacefully for a demonstration to ask the government to change something.
2. Congress can't stop people from having and carrying weapons, because we need to be able to defend ourselves.
3. You don't have to let soldiers live in your house, except if there is a war, and even then only if Congress has passed a law about it.
4. Nobody can search your body, or your house, or your papers and things, unless they can prove to a judge that they have a good reason to think you have committed a crime.
5. You can't be tried for any serious crime without a Grand Jury meeting first to decide whether there's enough evidence for a trial. And if the jury decides you are innocent, the government can't try again with another jury. You don't have to say anything at your trial. You can't be killed, or put in jail, or fined, unless you were convicted of a crime by a jury. And the government can't take your house or your farm or anything that is yours, unless the government pays for it.
6. If you're arrested, you have a right to have your trial pretty soon, and the government can't keep you in jail without trying you. The trial has to be public, so everyone knows what is happening. The case has to be decided by a jury of ordinary people from your area. You have the right to know what you are accused of, to see and hear the people who are witnesses against you, to have the government help you get witnesses on your side, and you have the right to a lawyer to help you.
7. You also have the right to a jury when it is a civil case (a law case between two people rather than between you and the government).
8. The government can't make you pay more than is reasonable in bail or in fines, and the government can't order you to have cruel or unusual punishments (like torture) even if you are convicted of a crime.
9. Just because these rights are listed in the Constitution doesn't mean that you don't have other rights too.
10. Anything that the Constitution doesn't say that Congress can do should be left up to the states, or to the people.